



**USAID**  
FROM THE AMERICAN PEOPLE

**AFGHANISTAN**

## SNAPSHOT

# Afghan Midwives Pride Tour to Egypt

### **Afghan midwives receive advanced training in Egypt**



*Afghan midwives pose with USAID and Egyptian government officials at the Suzanne Mubarak Regional Centre for Women's Health and Development in Alexandria, Egypt.*

***The training increased the knowledge and skills necessary to provide care to women throughout their childbearing years with the ultimate goal of saving the lives of women and babies.***

Midwife Shaiesta has delivered dozens of babies in Afghanistan, educated numerous Afghan mothers on the benefits of exclusive breastfeeding and safe birth spacing, and given countless other women the information they need to raise healthy families. What she had never done before was leave her home and family to further her professional development and career. She got that opportunity when she and 30 other midwives from 19 provinces across Afghanistan traveled to Egypt for a safe motherhood training program at the Regional Centre for Women's Health and Development in Alexandria, Egypt,

Sponsored by USAID, the Afghan Ministry of Public Health, and the Egyptian government, the trip was a unique educational partnership designed to enhance the skills of experienced midwives. For many of the midwives, this was their first international trip and their first time traveling without a male companion.

Because of this opportunity, Shaiesta and her sister-midwives have been empowered with knowledge, strategies, and techniques, which will prove to be life changing for many of Afghanistan's women who, without the attendance of a skilled provider during childbirth, face nearly insurmountable odds of survival. "This was an unforgettable visit for me, and I promise to share the knowledge that I have gained here with all midwives and midwifery teachers."

As many participants have shared, the experience had a great impact on not only their own commitment to their profession, but on their self-confidence as well.

"For me, this experience wasn't just about the training. It also gave me great confidence in myself as an Afghan woman and made me feel proud to be a midwife," said midwife Amana.

Since 2002, more than 3,200 midwives have been trained and are now working in the communities that need them the most. Many of these women never imagined they'd attend school, let alone become professionals. Now, nine years later, their hard work, dedication and passion, and generous donor support, has led them to this once in a lifetime opportunity.